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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Thursday, August 17, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "ANOTHER MONTH FOR SUMMER HATS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

If you have ever tried to buy a light-colored or white hat in the middle of August, you've found the stores full of fall fashions in hats- velvets in dark shades, black felts, and so on. If there are any summer hats still around they're the ones nobody wanted- queer in shape or too small or too large in headsize. But warm weather clothes will be needed for five or six weeks to come, and summer hats go with them.

So let's see what can be done to keep the old light hats in service for another month. I've asked Margaret Furry, of the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, to send us some information. I've reminded her also that men wear their straws and panamas until the "bell rings" on September 15th. Nobody has ever heard that bell- but I don't know a man who fails to obey it.

Miss Furry says the first thing to do is to strip the hat that's to be cleaned. Take off the ribbon hat band and any other trimming, also the headband. Light-colored straws can be washed, and felt hats may be either washed or dry-cleaned. Closely woven straws like leghorns, panamas, or milans can be sponged with a suds of lukewarm soft water and neutral soap, and scrubbed lightly until they are clean. Then the hat is rinsed thoroughly to remove all soap, and laid in the shade to drain for a short time before blocking. If the straw is coarse and loosely woven it's safer to use water very sparingly.

Maybe the hat is a little faded. The color may be improved by covering the hat with a cloth wrung out of half a pint of water containing 1 teaspoon of

ammonia. Bleaching with hydrogen peroxide may temporarily improve a white hat that is discolored and sun-burned.

After the hat is clean it has to be blocked. You can get a hat block, or make one yourself at little or no expense. Use a round bowl or deep saucepan somewhere near your headsize. First stretch a clean cloth over the bowl, pinning the corners underneath. This gives you something to fasten the padding to. Pad the mold to the right size and shape and cover smoothly with a piece of muslin.

Dry straw is stiff and brittle. It must first be softened by moistening in warm water, or by steaming it from the inside. To steam, hold it to the spout of a tea-kettle. Then stretch the hat over the mold and if necessary continue to soften it by holding it near the steam. Push and mold the straw gently to shape by hand, until it fits smoothly over the block. Tie a cord around the headline size. If the tip of the crown pulls away from the block, cover it with a dry cloth, then a wet one, and press flat with a warm iron. Leave the hat on the block until it is thoroughly dry.

Soften the brim of the hat with water and mold by hand. Then press on the under side, again using a dry cloth covered by a wet cloth to protect the straw.

If the straw looks dull and lusterless after cleaning and blocking, brush it over lightly with a thin coat of clear, colorless shellac, diluted about half and half with alcohol.

Now about felt hats. A good quality felt can be washed in water, but dry cleaning is usually more satisfactory. Use carbon tetrachloride to be on the safe side. It is non-inflammable, but should be used in a well-ventilated place for your own comfort. There should be enough so you can dip the hat in two separate bowls.

Brush the hat well to take off all loose dust. Then dip in the carbon tetrachloride, brush well with a soft clean brush, and rinse thoroughly in fresh solvent in the second bowl.

If the hat is white or very light colored, it may need to be treated with an absorbent, such as French chalk, powdered magnesia, cornstarch, or white talcum powder. While the hat is still saturated with the carbon tetrachloride, dust over it a thick layer of the absorbent material. Let the hat lie in a covered box overnight. In the morning, shake off the loose powder, let dry, and then brush off the remaining powder. Rubbing the hat with fine sandpaper improves it. Sometimes the dusting treatment without the dip in the solvent is enough for a slightly soiled light-colored felt.

If the brim of the hat needs freshening perhaps you can trim the edge a little. Lay the hat on a flat surface and cut evenly with a razor blade held at right angles.

I'm not forgetting the hats worn by husbands, brothers and sons. The chief point in which a man's hat differs from a woman's is in having a leather sweat band. This should be cleaned separately from the hat. Panamas and other straws are cleaned in the same way as women's straw hats.

To dry-clean a man's felt hat- and he'll be asking for it around September 15th!- dip the hat in carbon tetrachloride as in cleaning a woman's felt hat, drain, rinse, and absorb as much as possible of the solvent with a soft cloth. Block if necessary.

To clean the sweat-band, without having the leather get stiff in the solvent, Miss Furry recommends this method:

Put a teaspoonful of shaved paraffin into a pint of carbon tetrachloride in a glass jar. Stand the jar in warm water until the paraffin is melted. Then put the sweat-band in and let it soak for half an hour. Brush well, rinse in a clean bath of the paraffin solvent, squeeze out well by hand, and rub dry with a soft cotton cloth. This does not take long. The sweat-band is now ready to be replaced in the hat.

That ends Miss Furry's information about freshening hats.

